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ABSTRACT

Incidents of racially motivated violence have inspired many colleges and universities to enact discriminatory harassment policies. Little work has been done, however, to explore the cognitive structures (or structures of expectation) informing relations between groups. This research used interviews and group sessions to examine the nature of race relations on a particular college campus. It is pointed out that "schismogenesis," or the "process of differentiation in the norms of individual behavior resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals," is "responsible for many of the antipathies and misunderstandings which occur between groups in contact." Two specific incidents are highlighted. Revealed were differing structures of expectation in forming black and white students' perceptions of race and ethnicity. Conflicting theoretical analyses of the relationship between race and schooling are also examined. Central to these differences are conflicting value premises, the resolution of which is central to the educative process. The dominant group has not confronted the power of hegemony and are likely unaware of its power. Black students challenge that hegemony and refuse to give assent to practices, but are met with resistance from the dominant group in terms of blaming the victim and with policies nominally designed to protect those victimized. (JE)

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Discriminatory Harassment and Institutional Policy: Negotiations on the Border

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Incidents of racially motivated violence have inspired many college and universities to enact discriminatory harassment policies. While much of the analysis of these policies has centered on the legal issues of freedom of speech and equal access to educational opportunity, and much of the educational programming tends toward creation of curricular and co-curricular "celebrations of difference", little work has been done to explore the cognitive structures (or structures of expectation) informing relations between groups. This research examines the nature of race relations on a particular college campus. Revealed were differing structures of expectation informing Black and White students' perceptions of race and ethnicity. Also examined are conflicting theoretical analyses of the relationship between race and schooling. Central to these differences are conflicting value premises, the resolution of which is central to the educative process.

The Problem and its Context

Race relations on campus has long been of concern to college and university administrators, faculty members, and students and their parents. Most recently the increase in racially and ethnically motivated violence has been an incentive for the development and implementation (with varying degrees of success) of institutional policies designed to prohibit speech and actions directed toward specific racial or ethnic groups. While well-intentioned, these policies have become nearly as controversial as the action that spawned their development. But policies are reactions to the manifestations of race relations, and to fully understand the dynamics of race relations on campus, it is important to locate discriminatory harassment policies within the larger social context. Important in this examination are the ideological concepts of the individual and the community, the kinds and sources of power and authority, and the role of contradiction and opposition in the definition of social relations among cultures.

Fieldwork Site and Methods

Highlands State University (HSU), a pseudonym, is a medium-sized, state-owned institution situated in a rural community in one of the Middle Atlantic states. Total undergraduate student enrollment during the 1990-91 academic year stood at just over 5,000. Black students accounted for approximately 6 percent of total undergraduate enrollment, down from 8.5 percent in 1980; all minorities accounted for 7.6 percent of the total enrollment in 1990, down from 11 percent in 1980. Overall undergraduate student enrollments increased nearly 32 percent during that same period, from 3,780 to 5,183. As a consequence, not only did Black student enrollments decline as a percentage of the total, but in real numbers (from 319 to 301). Highlands State University is, judging from these figures, fairly typical of most state higher education institutions in the region. Likewise, the problems of race relations at HSU are not dissimilar to those found at other colleges and universities. The construction of individuals' perceptions of these problems is strongly informed, however, by the home communities from which these students are drawn.

Most White students at HSU are first-generation college students from working and middle class households within an hour-and-a-half drive of campus. Most Black students, also first generation college students, come from homes in one of several large metropolitan areas beyond a 100-mile radius of campus. Most White students grew up in racially stratified home communities, communities

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with "White jobs" and "Black jobs" and with social patterns relatively unchanged since the 1960's. Most Black students come from communities where race is less of a social marker, or at least where minorities have made significant strides toward equal economic opportunity over the last 30 years. The few Black students from the local communities attending HSU differ markedly from other Blacks at school; they recognize the influence of time-honored custom in the maintenance of social distinctions and have adapted (behaviorally and cognitively) to it. The analysis which follows recognizes the importance of such differences, and uses them to illustrate the necessity of designing educational interventions which account for local (and institution-specific) conditions.

This research explores the effects on HSU's institutional community of the development and implementation of a discriminatory harassment policy, but does not so much reveal its efficacy so much as the antecedents to the policy, including both structural (incidents suggesting the need for the policy) and cognitive (why participants believed such policies were needed at all). Such an inquiry serves to move the investigation beyond what we already know (i.e., that people ought to do right by one another), and into an exploration of what "doing right" means in particular social contexts.

Participants in the Study

Two primary methods of data collection were focus group interviews and one-on-one in-depth interviews. Four focus groups, each meeting twice, were composed of a total of 19 participants (students, administrators and faculty members): 84 percent White, 11 percent Black, and 5 percent (one student) Filipino. One-on-one interview participants totaled 24 students, administrators and faculty members, 62 percent were White and 38 percent were Black. In both formats, Blacks were over-represented and Whites were under-represented with respect to the population.

Participants were initially recruited using a criterion-referenced selection process designed to identify nominal campus leaders (e.g., the dean of students, the University president, presidents of student organizations and student government, long-time faculty members). Criterion-referenced selection was augmented by snowball sampling, wherein early participants were asked to identify others on campus who might have good knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding the discriminatory harassment policy. On-going evaluation of the participants' knowledge (both factual and representative) served to narrow the list of final focus group and interview participants to those summarized above.

Data Collection and Analysis

For the purposes of this report, data consisted of the "natural talk" of study participants, as elicited through focus group sessions and interviews. Tape recordings of these sessions were made and transcribed. Analysis of the transcripts was undertaken assuming that language and its meanings are inseparable from its social context, that language employs "logics" inseparable from its social context, that social context and meaning occupy (sometimes simultaneously) different cognitive and cultural levels of understanding, and that analysis should be directed toward the explication of inter-relationships among "language, situation, knowledge and action".[1]

Using a form of ground theory research[2], the language of the participants was examined to reveal the structures of expectation[3] in the language of participants, and categories of meaning were

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[1] Michael Stubbs, Discourse Analysis: The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 1-5.

[2] Anselm Strauss, Qualitative Research for Social Scientists (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[3] Deborah Tannen, "What's in a frame? Surface evidence for underlying expectations," in Roy O. Freedle, ed. New Directions in Discourse Analysis (Norwood, NJ: ABLEX Publishing Company, 1979), 137-182.

revealed. Different sets of social experiences shaped both individuals' structures of expectation and their perceptions about issues they believed to be related to these past experiences. Three basic structures of expectation account for most of the sources of conflict between racial groups: definitions of equality and equity, the sources of individual empowerment, and the extent to which individuals and groups are uninformed and misinformed about other groups ("communion").[4]

Equality and equity defined: The two-dimensional equality/equity perspective indicated participants' perceptions of what it meant for individuals to be treated "fairly" by society. The equality dimension of this perspective was characterized by the relative strength of participants' beliefs that the same application of "the rules" should be afforded all persons, regardless of an individual's social position. The equity dimension of this perspective was characterized by the relative strength of participants' beliefs that differential applications of "the rules" should be afforded to those in social positions which had prevented them from receiving benefits from society equal to those received by members of historically dominant groups.

Empowerment defined: The empowerment perspective was based on the relative degree to which participants believed that individual's social power was embodied in and derived from the racial/ethnic affiliation or from affiliation with the larger society. In this sense, empowerment referred to the bases of individual and collective identity, self-image, and locus of control which shaped individuals' actions, behaviors and beliefs.

Communion defined: Communion is the extent to which individuals believed that by expanding the base of shared information and knowledge about others, their actions, and their beliefs, better social relations among groups would result.

In each of these classes of perspectives cognitive differences defined social actors' orientation toward the discriminatory harassment policy. The experiences of social actors in large measure created the culture informing group perspectives, and through which each acted in response to the actions of other groups within the social environment. Cultures shape, and are shaped by, individual and collective experiences, which serve as psychological screens (structures of expectation) used to interpret new experiences. Findings suggest that cultural discontinuities rooted in these perspectives account to some degree for differences in the Black and White perspectives that shaped attitudes toward the discriminatory harassment policy. Two widely shared--and differentially interpreted--incidents are presented as illustrations.

Two Incidents as Illustrations

During the 1989 Fall Semester, fully one year prior to the beginning of this research, two incidents occurred on the HSU campus which illustrate for many participants the problems associated with race relations on their campus. Both incidents were widely reported by participants and reveal the three cognitive structures informing actors' perspectives. The first centers on reports of the effects that actions of HSU's predominantly-Black sorority had on other students on campus, and the sorority members' responses to other students' actions. The second incident centers on a widely-shared institutional event, Homecoming, and thus held specific--and divergent--meanings for members of the campus community.

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[4] The perspectives revealed were those held by social actors who participated in this study as disaggregated by race. This is not to say that all possible classes of perspectives are represented, only that they represent those revealed from the language and experiences of the classes of social actors who participated in this study. In other reports of this research, differences in perspectives based on social position (e.g., administrator, student) and by sexual orientation were also discussed. (See John R. Goss, III, "Race Relations and Institutional Policy: The Cultural Politics of an Institutional Anti-Harassment Policy" [unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1991], and "Race Relations and Discriminatory Harassment: From Policies to Practices", a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for Multi-Cultural Education, Orlando, Florida, February 14, 1992.)

The Sorority Incident

During the Fall Semester of 1989, members of HSU's predominantly Black sorority were assaulted by a group of residence hall students in what seemed to the sorority members to be a racially-motivated attack. Unlike other racially-motivated actions taken against HSU students, this incident resulted in a large-scale disruption of the campus and involved a number of students.

The incident seemed to be a reaction by White students to the distinctive, ritualized pledging behaviors of the sorority requiring new members to walk in lines and to sing together as they moved across campus. After an evening meeting in the student union, sorority members were making their way across campus, and as they reached a quadrangle bordered on four sides by residence halls, racial epithets were shouted at them from the windows. An investigation by the University's public safety officers could positively identify no perpetrators; therefore the incident was inactionable under the guidelines of the University's discriminatory harassment policy. Members of the sorority pressed the issue with judicial affairs officers, however, as well as with other University administrators. Because under the policy no action could be taken, these officials suggested the sorority write a letter to the editor of the student newspaper about the incident. The dean of students would write a follow-up letter pointing out that HSU was not immune from these kinds of incidents, and noting that there exists a mechanism to deal with them.

Although details of the incident varied among participants, Yvonne's version of this story, offered during a focus group session, was typical of most Black participants' reactions.

> Yvonne (Black female, senior): I can tell you that in my sorority, when we were pledging, it was something different that was happening on campus. Basically it was really simple. We walked in line and we sang. People would yell out the windows, call us names, tell us to shut up. They'd call us all sorts of things out the windows. We heard stuff that I had never heard. We even had some guys come up and try to push through us. I remember we took that through the judicial ladder. Nobody could be found, of course. I don't see how they could be. First of all, of course, whoever's room it was that the stuff was being yelled from, that person could say that he wasn't in his room, so I know it would be very hard to find those people. But we did take it as far as we could, and we made people aware that it happened, we wrote all kinds of letters to The Eagle and stuff. We basically stopped singing. We stayed in line--but it was something we wanted to do, it wasn't something we had to do. We stayed in lines, but we had people escort us, public safety guys. But I had never had anything like that happen before.
>
> Facilitator: How did it make you feel?
>
> Yvonne: I was shocked. I don't know why I should be; I guess I'm naive. But this was the first time I was shocked by what people did. So openly and loud.

One White student, a participant in another focus group, noted that he was part of the incident, and suggested that the Black students didn't understand why he and his friends were shouting at them.

> There was a time last semester when the [sorority members] were marching around outside our dorm. We were saying to "shut up", and they took it personally--like we had something against their background or what they stood for, which isn't always the case. I can understand the differences in the cultures and all; when you're younger, you're trying to build an image of yourself that you're proud of.
> - Mark (junior, White male)

This student's comments indicated that the differences present in the sorority students' behavior were symbols of an identity they were trying to create for themselves (the empowerment perspective). He did not suggest, however, that the actions he and others took in response to the sorority's ritual was wrong. But his recognition that misunderstanding goes both ways was reflective of the appearance that Black students seldom sense that they may have misunderstood White students and misinterpreted their actions. Here the student speaks to the level of communion between groups. The dialogue from a focus group, presented below, illustrates a widely-held belief that actions resulting from misunderstanding (or lack of communion) occur on both sides of the sorority incident.

> Steve (White male, senior): There was a predominantly Black sorority, and their thing is to walk on lines. And a lot of White students, they couldn't handle it. And they were yelling at them, racial epithets, from the dormitories. And there were guys who actually tried to break the line up and stuff. It was on both sides: Whites against Blacks and Blacks against Whites.
>
> Jessica (White female, junior): Those girls, I don't envy them. They did get a lot of flak. Even from girls. I heard mainly White comments, but in classes, after the girls would get up and leave, the guys would say, "Yeah, she's wearing her little uniform." Talk about them walking a certain way.

In many cases, White students tended to blame the incident on a small group of individuals believed to be "deviant" from the majority of the White students on campus. Blacks believed that the incident itself was indicative of attitudes held on campus. The actions of administrators which followed the incident provide the core around which the participants' perceptions of this incident centered. Pledging activities of Black Greek-letter organizations were different, and that was recognized by all Black participants, and each suggested that this difference may have been the reason for White students' reactions toward them. Singing together, dressing alike, walking in lines were the visual identification of this difference.

Both Black and White speakers suggested that the students making the threatening and racial remarks were doing so because they didn't understand what was going on (communion), and what it meant to the participants (empowerment): that they were scared by the difference, threatened by it, and they reacted to that perceived threat. One Black administrator cited the lack of understanding as central to the incident.

> We've had incidents occur which arise from a lack of understanding of differences. One of our female sororities on campus was harassed by Whites, were called names. They weren't hurting anyone; they were just going through their routine. They volunteered to do it. They were not challenging, physically. About 50 to 70 students came out one night when these students were going across campus. The question is, why would so many students come out? To harass and scream at the students? I think it's significant that 50 to 70 students came out of their rooms. . . . This is not an isolated incident as far as the Black fraternities and sororities getting harassed. So it was 5 or 6 days of real hell, to tell you the truth.

Black participants also seemed to believe that the administrative action taken in this case was, at best, inadequate, or, worse, a "racist" action in itself, serving to encourage a collective response to threats White students felt from the activities of Black greek-letter organizations. As one Black sorority member noted,

> As far as I know we didn't do anything outside the policy. We wrote to [the University president] and waited for him to respond. We wrote the local police department and everything. We have written letters and things like that, and nothing has been done.

> And even if we did call up the discrimination policy, [the president] would have taken no step to reprimand these people. He said that he made an effort to locate the people, but he couldn't find anyone. Nobody was willing to say anything. But the students this happened to had enough information that he should have been able to find someone. The students didn't want to risk going to them by themselves for fear of something else happening. And if they did get into it, the minorities would be blamed for starting something. That's how it's been. If [he] had even half-way acted concerned. His attitude seemed to be "whatever." He provided no evidence that he really tried to do anything that he said he did. He didn't notify us that the investigation was taking place, or that the investigation was over. We had to keep going to him. We kept getting the run around. Or he could have issued an apology. We didn't get any of that. We weren't asking him to take the responsibility for these students. We weren't asking him to take the responsibility. We were asking him to find them and let them take the responsibility.

The perceived inaction of the administration in response to this incident suggested to Black participants that, while there was a policy ostensibly to address incidents of this kind, there was no commitment to enforcing that policy. Sorority members believed they were victims of racially motivated harassment and even violence. They took the steps required to file a complaint, resulting in a stymied investigation and no action being taken. Although scores of individuals witnessed this event, none were willing to come forward during the investigation. One Black administrator remarked that this feeling was understandable in this instance. Again, the empowerment perspective is revealed.

> When you go out and tell students involved in an incident, "We haven't been able to find anybody," they don't react well to it. But we try to keep students constantly informed about what we are doing to resolve the situation, what actions we've taken. And I think we had their confidence that we were doing everything we could do; they saw we were doing everything we could do. So we get back to students on a weekly basis. . . . They feel that--well I've been told that, "What's the need of reporting something that nobody's going to take very seriously?"

What should have happened, in the opinion of most observers, was that action be taken against the offenders. The administration was seen by many participants to be afraid of confronting the incident. The administration's inaction demonstrated to Black participants a lack of commitment both to the policy and to racial understanding. The policy was simply something to protect the University's interests. Participants did not condemn the investigation, they condemned the moral abdication the actions seemed to represent.

> Mr. Alexander (Black male, minority affairs staff member): A lot of the harassment of the [sorority] came from the fact that they were showing a unified effort. The school had never been exposed to the intake process of a Black sorority, and because it was different from anything they had ever seen, they attacked it. Whereas, if they were down the road at a predominantly Black institution, they would have known that that is the way Black sororities go about campus at certain times, and that it is looked upon in a very positive way. Whereas, here it is looked upon as, "What are these people doing, wearing these hats and going across our campus?" It's just a situation where anything that's different is attacked. And nobody, nobody really took the time to question those young ladies about what it is they are going through.
>
> Dr. Kennedy (White female, faculty member): Well, maybe the next time they wear their hats, people will remember that it happened before. And by the third time it will be accepted.

> Dr. Hughes (Black male, faculty member): I think it goes deeper than that. You used [the sorority], for example. There are those of us who should understand this positive behavior, but we don't. And our behavior is being emulated by students. And even though we may not have acted as the students did, we silently condoned it. And I'm talking about the faculty, some administrators. Those same questions were not asked as directly as they should have been. We didn't give the right message.

In this dialogue, the central importance of both the empowerment and communion perspectives is revealed, and represented a wide-spread set of beliefs across campus. A predominant view of White administrators was that the sorority members were at fault; their behaviors (dressing alike, marching in lines, and singing) encouraged the reaction they received from the residence hall students. The administrative response to the incident suggests that conformity to the expectations of the larger group would prevent incidents like this from happening. As one White administrator said,

> Black students are creating some of the problems; their actions are inappropriate to the environment. [The] sorority incident was an example of hazing, like branding. [The] anti-hazing policy is seen as racist by Blacks; [they see these activities as] rites of passage. Maybe they want to be different. Both White and Black students are victims of conformity, confused individuals.

The Homecoming Incident

Homecoming at HSU, as at many colleges and universities, serves as a focal point for the Fall Semester. A football game and a dance following it are the primary elements of the event, and the dance is traditionally planned by the student Program Board, comprised of representatives of various student organizations. In 1989, however, there were two Homecoming dances, one sponsored by the Program Board and another by the Union of African-American Students (UAS). In focus group sessions and during one-on-one interviews this incident was used by participants to illustrate the problem of race relations on campus. The fact that this story was offered without prompting suggests it is significant. Here is one example of how the incident was revealed during a focus group session. The dialogue was triggered by group facilitator asking fairly generative question.

> Facilitator: Do you think the atmosphere here is racially tense; have there been incidents of racial harassment?
>
> Stephanie (White female, junior): I think there's a lot of tension. Last Homecoming, for instance, the Program Board had a Homecoming Dance. The dance committee had no Black members. Well, the predominantly Black fraternity got pissed off at us because we booked a band they didn't like. They were mad at us because we didn't book many Black performers, that we didn't get a Black group. So to get back at us, they decided to have their own dance that night. And that became a real messy situation. Our Homecoming is paid for by the students, by everyone, and we didn't mean to keep Black people away because it wasn't their kind of music. We tried to book a band that everyone would like. And there were members on the Program Board who really, really got mad because they had done this. Because this is--I think it's wrong for them to come around and have a separate event.
>
> Steve (White male, senior): Are there any minorities on the Program Board?
>
> Stephanie: Uh-huh. In fact, the girl on the Board got really mad at those guys. She thought it was the wrong way to go about it. It got really, really bad.

Steve then tried to help Stephanie understand that the lack of Black representation might, in fact, be what led to the problem. Still, Stephanie concluded that the decision to hold an alternate Homecoming Dance was, at best, impolite because the "real" Homecoming Dance was for everyone.

Another focus group used the example of the UAS and Homecoming when discussing ethnicity and citizenship. Participants suggested that the prospect of a White Student Union would be seen by Blacks as a threat, whereas the presence of a Black Student Union was not supposed to be threatening to Whites. Again, equality was the foundation of his remarks, and those of Stephanie. Here part of the equality/equity perspective is revealed.

> Don (White male, senior): I can't tell you how much this bothers me, this separation of minority students. Like Mr. and Miss Black Homecoming King and Queen. If we were the University of Alabama and I tried to start a White Student Union, holy-moly, just watch the world rain racism over my head. I mean, if we were to turn the tables around; just let me go down to Clarion College [an historically Black college] and try to start a minority affairs office for White people, the NAACP would be wringing their hands.
>
> Scott (White male, senior): At a predominantly White university, you need a Union of African-American Students. You need it here. If you started a minority student union at Clarion College, there wouldn't be a problem because you're a minority there. I almost went there because they offered me an other-race scholarship.
>
> Don: I'm not talking about other-race scholarships. If you went to--
>
> Scott: You don't need to start a White Student Union here; we're a White school.
>
> Don: If Ohio State started a White Student Union, and--it seems to go one way. Let's take the United States as a whole. It's easier to have minority student programs if you're a minority. But if you went anywhere where conditions were reversed, and you tried to have a White Student Union at a majority Black campus, you'd be in for trouble. The NAACP would be there within 30 seconds.
>
> Stephanie (White female, junior): I agree with Don. I don't think that's fair. If you were anywhere where they were advocating "White and Proud", people wouldn't be able to deal with it. And he's right, the NAACP or whatever would come down here and raise a stink.

This incident was replayed later in the focus group. Students were troubled by the attitudes they perceived to be held by Black students who organized the alternate dance. White students believed Black students were "setting themselves apart" from the rest of the student body, something the that ran counter to the expressed aims of racial integration and assimilation. To many White participants, actions like the dance demonstrated Black students' unwillingness to become part of the larger campus community. Comments by White students also suggested that a double standard was being applied in terms of Black and White student actions. The following vignette illustrates the power of the equality/equity dynamic in assessing the impact of social policies. In this particular case, the recent election of a "Black Homecoming" king and queen by the UAS (separate from the "real" Homecoming king and queen) was being discussed. Don had just mentioned how much that action bothered him.

> Mr. Peters (White male, student affairs officer): But let me ask a question to you. I want to understand the difference between groups that come together and work together around a common interest, and in the process see themselves in a way that is

perhaps being different from the larger community--and celebrating that. What is the difference between an African-American Homecoming queen and the Greek [organizations'] student athlete of the year award? Why is it that race provokes such a response, when we have groups in the larger society that come together around differences and celebrate those differences? That's accepted, but when we get to race, that's something different?

Scott (White male, senior): Well, race is something that you didn't choose. In [Greek] groups, we had the desire, so we went ahead and did it.

Mr. Peters: There's a common history here, culture that connects with race, with religion, that is there. Why is it that when people come together to learn about, discuss and celebrate that history and that heritage, that Blacks are supposed to frighten us? To see it as separatist?

Heather (White female, junior): Like the Homecoming queen, everyone was eligible to run for Homecoming queen, not just the majority group. But then they went ahead in their own special organizations--and promoted it in front of everyone like it was--they made themselves stand out. Whereas if we did a Greek Homecoming thing, and we went and put it out in front of everyone, that would also be the same thing. Why did they do that; why didn't they just go with the regular thing? The fact that they were putting it in front of the whole campus, a whole population, it makes a difference. It makes people resentful. Whereas there was an event that was going on and everyone was participating in it, so why did they have to go and do something separate? I think that's what causes people to look at them differently, the fact that they're bringing it out in front of everybody. Everybody gets a chance at the Homecoming.

Don (White male, senior): What really bothers me about the Homecoming incident was that a minority group on the campus was essentially putting down other minority groups, because if you're going to have a Mr. and Miss Black Homecoming Queen, why isn't there a Mr. and Miss Jewish Homecoming Queen, or an Oriental Homecoming Queen? Why is there only a Black Homecoming Queen?

Mr. Peters: For me, the difference is that if the University came in and said that there were going to be two different Homecoming kings and queens, and one was going to be Black and the other was going to be White, that would be a problem. If, in fact, the UAS came together and made that decision on their own, and the Jewish student association wanted to do it on their own, and any other group of students wanted to do the same thing, I don't see anything wrong with it.

Heather (White female, junior): But why would they want to do that?

Mr. Peters: Well, I guess you would have to, I suppose, ask them what the motivation was, just like someone would have to ask Don what his motivation was [for suggesting that] a White Student Union at Alabama would be acceptable. And what it means, why is it important? But if it comes from within the group, as opposed to being set up by the University, there's a large difference there.

Don: If I went out next semester and organized a bunch of Irish Americans, then I could have a Mr. and Miss Irish American Homecoming Queen?

Mr. Peters: Sure, you could.

> Jessica: But they [the UAS] didn't promote that thing to the whole campus. They just did it on their own. I mean, if you're going to do it, you have to make it available to everyone. Otherwise you'll be looked upon differently, otherwise the group is looked upon different.
>
> Scott: But that's the whole purpose. To be different. First of all, it was Mr. and Miss UAS; that's why they didn't promote it through the whole campus. It was for their organization. Just like greek elections, we don't promote that throughout the university.

Student-participants in this focus group (with the exception of Scott) viewed the UAS Homecoming event as an act of separatism. They saw the contest as exclusive of a majority of the campus community, and, therefore, it wasn't undertaken on the basis of equality. In this vignette, Scott positioned himself somewhat on both sides of the issue: it wasn't "right" because the UAS set themselves apart from other minority groups, but it was "equitable" because it was only by staging a UAS-sponsored Homecoming event that Black students would have a fair chance at achieving some recognition. On the other hand, fairness was central to Stephanie's comments: it wasn't fair to have the UAS contest because it wasn't available to everyone equally. The "real" Homecoming contest was open to everyone. She can't understand why Black students would want to set themselves apart.

Mr. Peters' comparison of the UAS event and the "Greek athlete of the year", and his suggestion that the latter event was similarly exclusive of a majority of the student body, was met with the statement that "race isn't something you choose." Again, the participants seemed to set race apart as a special class of difference: you can choose to be a member of a fraternity or a sorority, but you cannot choose to be Black (or White). This comment is perhaps reflective of a "valuing" of various races, that less-valued races required "equity" to ensure their equal opportunity.

The alternate Homecoming sponsored by the UAS was seen by most students as disruptive, "rude"; it was an example of the duality of social institutions, in this case, working backwards. Mr. Peters suggested that students should "value and celebrate diversity", and that the UAS action was just such a celebration. Scott contended that the UAS was forced to take the action because they could not achieve equity in any other way, given their small numbers on campus. The distinction Mr. Peters made between decision coming from <u>within</u> a group and decisions being <u>imposed on</u> a group was a differentiation not shared by most of the students in this group. It seemed that choosing to be a fraternity member engaging in fraternity activities was different from choosing to be a member of the UAS and to engage in UAS activities. Race, however, was clearly a different kind of issue to these participants. The powerful feelings this issue raised were revealing, and suggested that "setting themselves apart" was a perspective held about the actions of Blacks shared by other White students at HSU. Here the empowerment perspective comes into view.

When the president of the UAS was asked for an example of racial tension at HSU, the Homecoming incident was, again, used. This time, elements of the communion perspective are revealed in Angela's comments.

> A prime example is when there weren't enough Black people working on the Homecoming Committee, they [the Committee members] said that they were going toward what the majority wants, which is what any institution would do. If this was a predominantly Black school, I wouldn't expect to have Jon Bon Jovi or Billy Idol here. But this is a predominantly White school, so they cater toward the majority. One year we had a Black band here, and a lot of students came out for that. They played a mixture, and that went over well. And I think it's because they had a lot of input from the UAS, saying let's have this, let's have that.
> - Angela (Black female, junior, UAS president)

How Whites and Blacks Thought About the Policy

White perceptions of the policy suggest it was meant to ensure that everyone was treated with equal dignity and respect. White participants tended to describe those who engaged in acts of discriminatory harassment as deviant from the social norm. The student who admitted his involvement in the sorority incident believed that the Black students "misunderstood" the actions of the White students, that the sorority members believed the actions represented White students' feeling about them, rather than their feelings about the effects the sorority's actions had on the residents' living environment.

Black perceptions about the policy were shaped by a belief that certain groups of people need to be treated differently so that "equity" was achieved. This belief held that the historical subjugation of Blacks by Whites had created structural social inequities which demanded that differential treatment be accorded subordinate groups. Black participants tended to cite Whites' lack of understanding of Black history as a reason for continued incidents of racism, individual and institutional, in society. As an example, they cited Whites' failure to understand why Black Greek-letter organizations initiate members as they do as the reason for the sorority incident. The UAS was seen as the primary vehicle to address racial issues as they affected Black students at HSU.

Equality/Equity Perspective The UAS Homecoming incident served as a focal point for this perspective. Because Blacks represented so small a segment of the University population, they believed it was necessary for them to hold an event through which they could come together as a group, to identify with one another. They recognized that the larger Homecoming program would be geared to the majority, and "cultural" differences necessitated a separate event. Blacks did not view this as "separatism"; rather they saw the program as something consistent with their cultural orientation. Difference, to Black participants, was something "normal" for them. Unlike Whites, who tended to see difference as threatening, Blacks recognized that differences existed between Blacks and Whites and worked from that realization. The sorority incident also demonstrated a similar set of differences, and likewise revealed the context of the Black perspective. For Blacks who participated in this study, because they recognized and accepted that differences existed between Blacks and Whites, the equity component tended to be adopted in interpreting events.

Empowerment Perspective Differences in participants' perceptions of the locus of power in society was a second perspective that shaped individuals' perceptions of HSU's discriminatory harassment policy. Differences among participants' perceptions of the importance of racial/ethnic group versus society orientation clearly differentiated White from Black participants. Whites believed Blacks' actions set them apart from the larger society. Because they "acted" differently, they were at least partially responsible for creating much of the misunderstanding related to race relations. The existence of the Union of African-American Students and its related programming (the Homecoming controversy in particular) represented for many Whites the perception that Blacks were not interested in an "equal" society, but rather a differentiated one. Black students' behaviors were believed to set them apart from the larger society, and that Blacks were more interested in their ethnic affiliation than with their responsibilities to the larger society. These behaviors served to set Blacks apart from the dominant culture, and created a difference between Whites and Blacks that Whites believed to be antithetical to Black demands for "equality." Empowerment for Whites seemed to reside in the concept of equality, a social contract understood to exist between individuals in a society. Black participants, on the other hand, believed they had been systematically and institutionally denied access to the majority culture. As a result of this alienation, Blacks tended to turn inward, looking for support within a smaller, racially-similar group. Many of HSU's Black students had little experience in a White-majority environment prior to coming to the University. As a result, many Black students simply did not have the "skills" to survive at HSU, and these groups and services helped them to develop the required skills. Because many Black students had gone to predominantly Black high schools in predominantly Black communities before coming to HSU, seeing Blacks in subservient roles created a need among Black students to achieve some level of power for themselves within the University. The result was the close affinity of many Blacks, students and administrators, for the UAS. But, as alluded to above, this affinity also

drove a wedge between Whites and Blacks, as Whites considered this process of self-empowerment as an act of separatism. Blacks frequently noted the importance of resisting assimilation. Many Black participants noted the emerging sense of "Black pride" among Blacks in general, and the effects it had on White students at HSU. They sensed that White students were threatened by Blacks' interest in Black culture, an interest which challenged Whites' expectations of society. This "inward" focus provided Blacks with a sense of power derived from their group, not borrowed from a society from which they felt alienated.

Communion Perspective Participants' perceptions regarding either racial/ethnic or societal orientations, and of the level and meaning of empowerment of individuals and groups, related to the third perspective that shaped participants' perceptions of the discriminatory harassment policy: communion, or the degree to which information was shared between groups. Participants' knew they didn't always understand one another, and recognized the importance of improving the level of understanding in order to improve social relations on campus. But, again, differences in the concept of "understanding" itself contributed to differences in actors' perceptions of the discriminatory harassment policy. Understanding was seen as important to decision-making, but was not recognized as being important to creating a community. Understanding those who are different was central to the Black perceptions of the need for social change. For Blacks, the need to resist assimilation into "White" society required them to understand both Black and White society. Through this understanding of both societies, Blacks believed they maintained a balance between both aspects of their dual reality. But they also understood that the actions by Blacks which demonstrated a pride in their shared culture were threatening to Whites. Much of this threat was the result of Blacks' apparent insistence on their "difference" from Whites. To many Blacks, acceptance of this "difference" was central to improving understanding. They had accepted, and in some ways had chosen, difference for themselves, while recognizing the related demands such "difference" placed on the individuals who had chosen it.

For Whites, "difference" was considered an anomaly, something to be "blended" away. For many Whites, understanding implied the creation of something new, but was built on the existing foundation of equality, the essential "sameness" of all people. This approach to increasing understanding was essentially ahistorical; it began in the here and now. White participants' used phrases like, "I don't understand why we can't get past the color of someone's skin," when they spoke about increasing understanding, discounting the importance of color as a symbol in shaping the understanding individuals held of others. White participants believed that increased understanding of members of minority groups would lead to better relations between the races, but they also believed that education must flow in both directions. White experiences with Blacks suggested to them that Blacks shared their "culture" with others only grudgingly.

Moffatt's Findings: A Confirmation

Moffatt suggests that a conflict exists between the American ideal of individualism and the equally American ideal of racial equality. Behaviors associated with a racial identity reflect individualism, yet if these behaviors are too "different" they become suspect. It is the tension between individualism and equality that poses the threat to students who are, themselves, not yet fully formed. If everyone is "just the same under the skin," extreme individuality is suspect and usually the fault of the other party. The solution to the racial problem for many of the most threatened students was total assimilation.

> Students who had "problems" with Blacks almost always protested that they had nothing against Black people on physical grounds; different skin color really did not matter to them at all, they insisted. It was the way Black people acted that bothered

them. If only Blacks were more open and friendly and "just like us," then there would be no problems with them, these students claimed.[5]

Moffatt suggests that this attitude may reflect the image of the "good Black" as portrayed in the popular media, the African-American who was always open and friendly, relates to everyone strictly as a person, is "well imbedded with his Black identity . . . [yet] treats his identity . . . as a big joke. . . . [H]e works for the White establishment. . . . If only all American Blacks were such very perfect human beings . . . then there would be no White racism left in American culture at all."[6]

But if the "good Black" is what White America expects to see, how are educators to deal with the conflicts arising when expectations are not met? In this examination, the constructs of equality/equity, empowerment and communion may begin to offer suggestions for educational interventions.

Discussion

At Highlands State University, the failure to have defined "community standards" upon which the discriminatory harassment policy rested required standards to emerge from the differential perspectives of social actors within the institution, and undermined the effectiveness of the discriminatory harassment policy. In this environment, where actions compounded opinions regardless of their intent, a destructive process of action and reaction was perpetuated. Perceptions of the policy, as outlined above, differed according to participants' perspectives, which were consistent within classes representing participants' race. But what importance did these differences have respecting the development and administration of a well-intentioned discriminatory harassment policy? For the policy to be meaningful and effective, it must be consistent with individuals' and groups' expectations of it. As most participants noted, just to have a policy meant very little; ancillary interventions (prevention and understanding) need to be incorporated into its application were equally important. Simply to eliminate the sources of harassment would not be enough, according to nearly all participants in this study. Harassment was the end result of conflict, and to eliminate harassment necessitated the examination of the sources of conflict.

Cultural Politics and Negotiations on the Border

Culture is manifest in the structures of expectation individuals hold about how their environment works. Cultural boundaries represent the lines of demarkation between/among groups, formed as a result of the structures of expectation that define what is important to individuals and groups. Cultural politics are the "negotiations on the border" between racial and ethnic identities representing the extra-structural expectations and assumptions of individuals and their affinity groups in relation to the larger social environment, and the issues by which individual and group differences are defined and defended. In order to understand the influence of cultural politics on individuals' exercise of their role responsibilities, it is necessary to understand how experiences define the dimensions of cultural politics.

Patterns of behavior result from specific sets of shared experiences informed by structures of expectation. Schismogenesis, or the "process of differentiation in the norms of individual behaviour resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals", is "responsible for many of the antipathies and misunderstandings which occur between groups in contact."[7] Symmetrical differentiation occurs

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[5] Michael Moffatt, "Race and Individualism," chapt. in Coming of Age in New Jersey (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 167.

[6] Ibid., 167-168.

[7] Gregory Bateson, Naven (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958), 175-177.

between groups with similar aspirations and behavior patterns, but which differ in the orientation of these patterns. In these instances, groups adopt behaviors in response to other groups' behaviors. In cases of complementary differentiation, the behavior patterns of two groups are fundamentally different, leading to the differential treatment of groups by particular groups, conflict and mutual hostility.[8] A state of "dynamic equilibrium"[9] between groups is achieved within specific social environments, and its elements need not necessarily be applicable to another similar environments. In the case of Highlands State University, both symmetrical and complementary relationships exist between the groups in this study.

Racial groups at HSU may be viewed as having essentially similar aspirations (symmetrical schismogenesis): they share beliefs that particular behaviors of members of one group are clearly unacceptable. Other patterns of behavior (complementary schismogenesis), however, were subject to differences in interpretation; it is within the context of these behaviors that differences between groups are revealed. Using the sorority and Homecoming incidents as illustrations, these differences and their consequences become apparent.

Symmetrical Schismogenesis In the sorority incident serves as an example of symmetrical schismogenesis. The behavior patterns of members of the predominantly Black sorority are unlike the behavior patterns associated with the pledging process of other, predominantly White Greek-letter organizations. Both Black and White groups' pledging activities are designed to create a bond between pledges and the Greek-letter organization, yet they differed from each other in terms of the orientation of the behaviors associated with the actions. Whites noted that the Black students "brought this incident on themselves" by acting different; Blacks tended to believe that they were behaving in a way that was, to Blacks, culturally significant and was not "wrong." Similarly, in the Homecoming incident, the aspirations of Black and White students' behaviors are the same: the organization of a special event to coincide with a University celebration. It is in the orientation of these programs that differences were revealed. Because the UAS chose to sponsor a program apart from that sponsored by the Homecoming Committee, White students' analysis of the event itself tends to focus on the behaviors of those who were "different", comparing them with the behaviors of those who don't act differently. Likewise, Black students speak of the Homecoming incident by focusing on differences in behaviors between the UAS and the Homecoming Committee. Symmetrical relationships between White and Black perspectives are revealed in these incidents and the responses these differences generated are clearly competitive. Symmetrical relationships shape the communion perspective: all groups recognize the need to improve understanding among groups, but differ in their orientation, with competitive rivalry resulting in emphasis on respective behavior patterns. The focus is on the behavior of individuals and groups, not on understanding individuals and their behaviors.

Complementary Schismogenesis Complementary relationships are also at work between groups at the University. The equality/equity perspective in large part rests on the degree to which participants hold that groups are on fundamentally equal footing in society. Those who adopted the equality-component as their orientation believe that groups are fundamentally "equal" to one another, therefore differential treatment of particular groups serves to tip the social balance in their favor. Those who adopted the equity-component believe that certain groups are structurally disadvantaged in society, and, therefore, must be assured "equity" with the dominant social groups. Clearly the aspirations of these two groups are not the same. Differences in aspirations tend toward a mutual hostility between adherents of the respective components of the equality/equity perspective. Likewise, the degree to which individuals' primary identification is with their racial/ethnic group or with the larger society is an illustration of complementary relationships. The tendency of Blacks to turn to "their culture" as a source of power runs contrary to the predominant White belief in the power of the larger social order. Whites

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[8] Gregory Bateson, "Bali: The Value System of a Steady State," chapt. in Steps to an Ecology of Mind, (New York: Ballentine Books, 1972), 109.

[9] Bateson, Naven, op. cit., 190.

express hostility toward Blacks for this behavior, believing that such an orientation allows Blacks to "set themselves apart", creating hostility between Blacks and Whites. Blacks, on the other hand, consider the structural alienation from the larger society as a hostile act itself, their only alternative is to turn inwardly, away from the dominant society. Such an oppositional stance was viewed by Whites as antithetical to the philosophy of the larger society.

Implications in Theory and Practice

The contested value-premises represented by the conflict between hegemonic desires for social assimilation and subordinate groups' need for distinctive cultural identities and histories was noted over twenty years ago.[10] Yet, the increase in racially-motivated conflict in American society seems to suggest an examination of race relations on campus be undertaken from a "contested truths" perspective[11]. It is meaning which drives actions and understanding, not simply language use or economic determination, and understanding meaning is central to understanding relationships of schismogenesis. Meaning making--and the understanding of meaning making--are central to the educational process, and central to the development of educational programming is first understanding the influences conflicting meaning systems have on inter-group relations.

Schismogenesis, Language Differences and Cultural Discontinuities

The outcomes of complementary relationships are "classes" of students at HSU, and one such class is a broadly undifferentiated class of "Black students", as viewed by both Whites and Blacks. Special programming is a de facto recognition of minority students as an academic underclass, and because equivalent programming opportunities for White students are not as visible, a stratified relationship is unintentionally promoted. Such "special classes" promote conflict between the majority and the "special" groups; responses to such conflict was an attempt to balance the restraining forces at HSU through the application of policy. Both the sorority and the Homecoming incidents offer illustrations: groups fell back on the emphasis on fundamentally different structures of expectation as justification for both the actions and the responses to the actions, their adaptations to the behaviors of other groups.

The danger of an ongoing process of complementary schismogenesis at HSU is the eruption of intergroup conflict as members with divergent cultural orientations (structures of expectation) seek to maintain their identities at the expense of the formerly shared aspiration for the policy. Focus on distinctive cultural identities (patterns of behavior) may lead to the creation of symbolic, emotional differences between groups by members of the respective groups, many aspects of which are seen in the analysis above as well as in data presented earlier.

Perspectives (structures of expectation) lead to truth-making, which lead to differences between groups, which leads to conflict. Central to each of these processes is the use of language and meanings attached to words and concepts. Language is an artifact of culture, it is not culture. Language is socially grounded and historically shaped. In a more celebrated debate over the antecedents of minority students academic success is the Ogbu-Trueba controversy of structure versus language.

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[10] Charles S. Bullock, III and Harrell R. Rodgers, Jr., Racial Equality in America (Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company, 1975), 149.

[11] Daniel T. Rodgers, Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics Since Independence (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

Ogbu's model[12] is arguably structurally deterministic in that he chooses to credit economic disadvantages as the cause of minority under-achievement (cultural discontinuities). Ogbu notes three sources of school failure for minority students: society (in historical practice of denying access to opportunities and access to good education), in the schools (lower expectations from school personnel, labeling of minority children as having educational "handicaps", and cultural differences between minority students and school personnel), and in the community.[13] Ogbu also uses social or collective identity formation to explain differences among minority groups; specifically he cites the tendency of involuntary minorities to develop a sense of social identity in opposition to the social identity of the dominant society. The result is "cultural inversion", or the tendency of one population (involuntary minorities) to regard certain forms of behavior as holding meaning not appropriately associated with that group, and claim other (often opposite) behaviors as appropriate to their group.[14] Involuntary immigrants' history suggests they have had greater difficulty crossing cultural/language boundaries due to the oppositional nature of their cultural frame of reference and identity; the social pressures against "acting White" are great and difference is seen as a marker of ethnic/racial identity, not a barrier to be overcome.[15] So, the real questions are: Do students come from segments of society traditionally denied access? Do minorities perceive "schooling" as a means toward replacing their cultural identities with those of their "oppressors" without full assimilation or reward? And does the relationship between minorities and schools represent one of trust?[16]

Trueba's emphasis on language differences, or "dis-abilities", focuses analysis on the artifacts of culture, the outcomes of structural differences (including economics).[17] Trueba claims that Ogbu's taxonomy awards to structural forces the power to create (and recreate) perspectives held by certain classes of minority groups. Instead, Trueba argues that psychological forces, based on language use and communication, work to shape minority success in the schools. Trueba's implication that structural and psychological perspectives are mutually exclusive creates a false argument. Structural constraints give meaning to language; language use communicates meaning to others; others' actions reinforce (or create) structures of expectation among individuals. The genesis of this condition is not nearly so important as understanding its processes.

As for Trueba's complaint that Ogbu has failed to provide empirical support for his model, what is needed is to test it to determine if it stands up as a means of explanation and analysis.

If we use language and meaning as tools for analysis, as a way of revealing the underlying structures shaping meaning, we reveal the underlying issues shaping individuals' and groups' understanding of race relations. What is needed is a synthesis of these two inter-related and mutually reinforcing models. Culturally-responsive pedagogy is one place to begin to build such a theory of practice.

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[12] John U. Ogbu, "Cultural discontinuities and schooling," Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 13 (December 1982): 290-307.

[13] John U. Ogbu, "Variability in minority school performance: a problem in search of an explanation", Anthropology and Education Quarterly 18 (December 1987): 312-334.

[14] Ibid., 323.

[15] Ibid., 331.

[16] Ibid., 333-334.

[17] Henry Trueba, "Culturally based explanations of minority students' academic achievement", Anthropology and Education Quarterly 19 (September 1988): 270-287.

Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy: A Synthesis

Erickson suggests such an alternative pedagogical perspective. He correctly recognizes that the definition of academic "success" is the result of a political process involving the negotiation of meaning (symmetrical schismogenesis). These negotiations occur on the border between ethnic/racial identities (what it means to be what we are, and how that manifests itself in speech, dress, behavior, etc.), which constitute the boundaries of a culture. By assigning a negative value to cultural behaviors, conflict is created which transforms a boundary into border. Over time this leads to increasing cultural differentiation (complementary schismogenesis) in response to isolation and negation of characteristics. This also creates a lack of trust (based on a perceived failure of a dominant group to be interested) among members of the subordinate group. Minority members withhold assent to being subsumed under the dominant group because they no longer trust in the benign use of authority Resistance and opposition are sometimes hallmarks of this reluctance to assent.[18] (Witness the sorority and Homecoming incidents.)

> When school practice is conducted according to the existing conventional wisdom, minority students . . . usually do not fare well. . . . Were it not for the regularity of hegemonic practices, resistance by the stigmatized would not be necessary. . . . Resistance could be informed by an explicit social analysis that unmasks the practices of the oppressive. Yet currently neither the oppressors nor the oppressed face squarely the character of their situation, and resistance is often inchoate just as oppression is not deliberately intended.[19]

Here we discover the context of HSU's dilemma. The dominant group (White students and administrators) have not confronted the power of hegemony, and are likely unaware of its power. Black students (mostly) challenge that hegemony and refuse to give assent to practices, but are met with resistance from the dominant group in the form of blaming the victim and with policies nominally designed to protect those victimized.

Erickson's concept of culturally responsive pedagogy confronts these issues, diffusing the long-term process of schismogenesis.

> [T]he politics of legitimacy, trust and assent seem to be the most fundamental factors in school success. . . . [A] much more prevalent pattern . . . is for cultural differences to make a negative difference, (1) because they contribute to miscommunication in the early grades and (2) because those initial problems of miscommunication escalate into student distrust and resistance in later grades.[20]

According to Erickson's analysis, three concerns are central to minority/majority relations in schools: legitimacy of the process, trust in the authorities charged with the process, and assent to the process. Legitimacy stems from ground-up acceptance of institution and its representatives by those in the minority--transformative practice; trust is based on evidence of efforts: distrust of legitimacy results in

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[18] Frederick Erickson, "Transformation and school success: the politics and culture of educational achievement", Anthropology and Education Quarterly 18 (December 1987): 335-356.

[19] Ibid., 352.

[20] Ibid., 354.

increasing oppositional/resistance attitudes; culturally responsive pedagogy is a comprehensive, not specialized, approach to education.[21]

Erickson's model incorporates language, structure, power and authority, all recognized by Ogbu and Trueba, and present in the HSU environment as significant influencer of behavior and perception. The first element of culturally responsive pedagogy requires the assessment of the degree to which there are trusting relationships within society. Important to this analysis are the existence of historical practices which deny access of particular groups to opportunities. Within the organizations, are their examples of lower expectations of minority students from school personnel, or does labeling of minority occur, or are there cultural differences between minority students and school personnel? The solution requires collective recognition of the legitimacy of the process, trust in the authorities charged with the process, and assent by all parties to the process.[22] The first choice to be made, however, is a choice about what "education" is supposed to be: transmissive or transformative?

To effect change in race relations at HSU, members of the collegiate community must first confront the conflict underlying these relationships on campus. Confrontation of conflict suggests a confrontation with the need to reorder the institutional society in an attempt the counteract the prevailing attitudes in students' home communities. The institution must present a clear alternative to that which students are accustomed. One kind of structuring is common to successful reform movements. Wallace calls this process "revitalization"; it begins with the disruption of the existing system, resulting in stress within the system leading to a collective breakdown in the mental image members have of society and culture.

Educational Interventions: Maintenance or Re-Ordering?

Case studies often do not lead to universally applicable prescriptions for educational reform; most time they can only offer insight as to the shortcomings of existing practice. Such revelations are not without merit, however; rather they should serve to make education professionals more aware that universally applicable remedies (such as discriminatory harassment policies) seldom address the underlying problems in schools and in society. This case of Highlands State University and its discriminatory harassment policy may serve that purpose, if one accepts the belief that education should be a transformative process.

As the case illustrates, the existing system of relationships at HSU is being disrupted, but attempts to transform the disruption into revitalization processes have not been forthcoming. Rather, the policy and its processes have been used (for better or for worse) as a substitute for the more hazardous task of confronting and acknowledging the conflict as a real element of the institutional milieu. The policy defines the rules by which the process is set in motion; the process itself is almost devoid of the human elements of anger, disgust, confusion, and rejection which frame the problem of race relations. The policy is a rational, linear problem resolution mechanism, but it is not an affective, emotional, dialectical process of problem identification, confrontation and understanding. It seems that Highlands State University is strongly positioned to engage in the transformative process. Social reordering is the result of the successful management of conflict--an ongoing "structuring" process, a process unique to the social circumstances of individual schools, colleges and universities.

For revitalization to occur, already existing social elements need to be recombined into a new social and internally consistent structure which will become the new social system, and for such recombination movements to succeed, social actors must be prepared to overcome challenges and conflict, adapt to the external world, and solve practical problems in the form of new and workable

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[21] Ibid., 354-355

[22] Ibid., 318-319

social and political reforms.[23] This adaptive process inevitably leads to conflict between various social constituencies and the process involves resolving "contradictions between outcomes and activities mandated by the production of these outcomes."[24] In the case of Highlands State University, "structuring" seems to center around an understanding of the concepts of equality/equity, social empowerment, and communion. Confrontation of conflict requires engagement on these issues.

Equality/Equity Issues The Homecoming incident was--and could be again--a context through which to engage the institutional community in a confrontation with and an examination of what different groups mean when they speak of the fair and equitable treatment. It seems that faculty and staff advisors to campus organizations should be prepared not only to accomplish an organization's stated mission (e.g., to hold a Homecoming Dance), but should be prepared to transform the task into a learning experience. This kind of transformation requires advisors who are willing to confront the bases of the conflict, not just the symptoms of that conflict.

Social Empowerment Issues The sorority incident illustrates an opportunity for the institutional community to tie into differences in perspective as they relate to differing centers of social identification and power among groups. The details (or at least a general knowledge) of this incident were widely known across the HSU community. Such a widely shared experience should serve well as a focus for residence hall, classroom or student (and faculty) organization programming. The perceived desire of the administration to rid themselves of the incident (at least as far as one effected group saw it) only reinforced the problem. In this case, the policy was an impediment to understanding.

Communion Confrontation of these kinds of incidents (and through this confrontation, an engagement with them) should serve to reveal the areas of misunderstanding (differences in language and meaning) between groups. Honest confrontation should lead to improved understanding, and, eventually, to more communion among individuals and groups. Without the courage to confront the underlying problems of race relations on campus--or without the institutional support to engage in that confrontation--communion among groups will continue to lag. Support for those courageous enough to engage fundamental differences must come from institutional authorities (presidents, deans and directors) who are themselves willing to risk conflict for the sake of improved community on campus.

Action Agenda at HSU

As this case illustrates, the existing system of relationships at HSU is being disrupted, but attempts to transform the disruption into revitalization processes have not been forthcoming. Rather, the policy and its processes have been used (for better or for worse) as a substitute for the more hazardous task of confronting and acknowledging the conflict as a real element of the institutional milieu. The policy defines the rules by which the process is set in motion; the process itself is almost devoid of the human elements of anger, disgust, confusion, and rejection which frame the problem of race relations. The policy is a rational, linear problem resolution mechanism, but it is not an affective, emotional, dialectical process of problem identification, confrontation and understanding. It seems that Highlands State University is strongly positioned to engage in the transformative process. Social reordering is the result of the successful management of conflict--an ongoing "structuring" process, a process unique to the social circumstances of individual schools, colleges and universities.

But for revitalization to occur, already existing social elements need to be recombined into a new social and internally consistent structure which will become the new social system, and for such recombination movements to succeed, social actors must be prepared to overcome challenges and conflict, to adapt to the external world, and to solve practical problems in the form of new and workable

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[23] Anthony F. C. Wallace, "The Psychology of Culture Change," chapt. in Culture and Personality, Studies in Anthropology series (New York: Random House, 1970), 164-206.

[24] Charles J. Fombrun, "Structural Dynamics Within and Between Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly 31 (September 1986): 413-416.

social and political reforms.[25] This adaptive process inevitably leads to conflict between various social constituencies and the process involves resolving "contradictions between outcomes and activities mandated by the production of these outcomes."[26] In the case of Highlands State University, "structuring" seems to center around an understanding of the concepts of equality/equity, social empowerment, and communion. Confrontation of conflict requires engagement on these issues.

The first element of culturally responsive campus, then, requires an assessment of the degree to which there are trusting relationships within the campus community. Important to this analysis are issues related to historical practices which have denied access of particular groups to available opportunities. Are their examples of lower expectations of minority students from academic personnel? Does labeling of minorities occur? Are there cultural differences between minority students and college personnel? The solution requires collective recognition of the legitimacy of the process, trust in the authorities charged with the process, and assent by all parties to the process.[27]

It seems that faculty and staff advisors to campus organizations should be prepared not only to accomplish an organization's stated mission, but should be prepared to transform the task into a learning experience. This kind of transformation requires advisors who are willing to confront the bases of the conflict, not just the symptoms of that conflict. Opportunities exist for the institutional community to tie into differences in perspective as they relate to differing centers of social identification and power among groups. Widely shared experiences (even experiences of conflict and anger) should serve well as a focus for residence hall, classroom or student (and faculty) organization programming. The perceived desire of the administration to rid themselves of the incident (at least as far as one effected group saw it) only reinforced the problem. In this case, the policy was an impediment to understanding. Confrontation of these kinds of incidents (and through this confrontation, an engagement with them) should serve to reveal the areas of misunderstanding (differences in language and meaning) between groups. Honest confrontation should lead to improved understanding, and, eventually, to more communion among individuals and groups. Without the courage to confront the underlying problems of race relations on campus--or without the institutional support to engage in that confrontation--communion among groups will continue to lag. Support for those courageous enough to engage fundamental differences must come from institutional authorities (presidents, deans and directors) who are themselves willing to risk conflict for the sake of improved community on campus. Faculty members, student affairs personnel, academic administrators, and student leaders all occupy positions of influence on campus. What they need to do is engage, in the classroom, in residence halls, in academic regulations, and in student organizations, the status quo, assumptions guiding decisions, and beliefs underlying decision making; to encourage such courageous engagement of issues, top-level administrators (including boards of trustees) must commit themselves to the process without fear of losing control.

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[25] Anthony F. C. Wallace, "The Psychology of Culture Change," chapt. in Culture and Personality, Studies in Anthropology series (New York: Random House, 1970), 164-206.

[26] Charles J. Fombrun, "Structural Dynamics Within and Between Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly 31 (September 1986): 413-416.

[27] Erickson, ibid., 318-319.